

**Commercial Aviation**

# BUSINESS as USUAL

## *Airline Operation in Nationalist Spain —Some First-hand Impressions*

AS every lover of his country knows, the Spaniard is the most difficult person in the world from whom to obtain information, even if the imparting may be greatly to his own benefit. The extreme reticence, on both private and public matters, which is part of every Spaniard's make-up in dealing with anybody but a personal acquaintance, renders him a hopeless propagandist.

Thus, when trying to find out in Nationalist Spain what exactly was happening in the way of civil aviation, I was not surprised to learn that nowhere in London was information available. So I decided to go and get it for myself. In the Foreign Press Office at San Sebastian I learned that General Kinderland (who is Spanish, though his name sounds German), the Air Minister, was himself only in direct control of military aviation, while in the civil field a new air transport company, Iberia, had been formed more or less under the aegis of the Lufthansa.

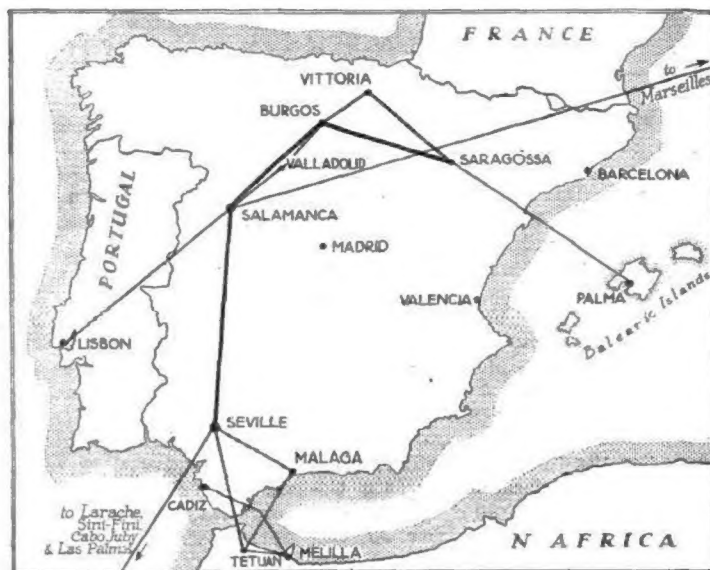
As I had anticipated, the air was providing a welcome relief of pressure on the efficient, but heavily overcrowded, railways. As there was no airport at San Sebastian, however, I travelled on by bus to Burgos, where it was expected that the Ministry of the Interior would be able to introduce me to the management of Iberia. There I was informed that this company had two principal directors, one German and one Spanish. The latter's name was Don Daniel Araoz, Baron de Sacro Liria, and he lived in Salamanca, where the company had its main offices. Armed with an introduction to him, I set off there by train.

Don Daniel proved to be one of the most charming Spaniards I have ever met. He has been a director of four successive Spanish air companies, of which he considers Iberia by far the most efficient. The machines used are Junkers Ju.52s, since these had proved the best all-purpose machines available. Safe and serviceable, they have a good payload and sufficient speed to cover all the mainland routes in Spain in a few hours.

### **The System**

Actually, the basis of the present system of airlines is a two-day route from Las Palmas, capital of the Canaries, right through to Palma, Majorca. The overnight stop is at Salamanca, where passengers sleep at the Grand Hotel, which is also used by Lufthansa passengers and crews on the line to Lisbon and South America. This main Iberia route is flown twice weekly, and also passes through Cape Juby, Sini-Fini and Larache (all in Spanish Africa), Seville, Burgos and Saragossa. In addition, there are daily local services between Seville, Salamanca, Burgos and Saragossa, daily connections from Burgos to Vittoria, connections every other day from Saragossa to Vittoria, and from Salamanca and Burgos to Valladolid. There is also a branch line running every other day between Seville and Tetuan, in Spanish Morocco.

Connections with other European countries are by Lufthansa from Salamanca direct to Marseilles, Geneva, Stutt-



Routes now being operated from Nationalist areas.

gart and Berlin, and by Ala Littoria from Tetuan, Cadiz, Malaga and Majorca to Rome.

The Ju.52 is a hardy machine that can be left out all night in any kind of weather without coming to much harm. For, naturally, Spanish airports are not yet up to very high standards. Runways are undreamed-of luxuries and the extensive airport buildings that we take for granted are only just beginning to appear. Many landing-grounds have been constructed all over the country for the use of military machines. These are a good start, and when the war is over it is hoped to develop most of them into first-class aerodromes for civil use.

Traffic is heavy and nearly all the services are full. Few army officers travel, since these can fly for nothing in military machines. The bulk of the passengers are Government and Civil Service officials and Spanish and foreign business men and technicians. The military authorities at present have their headquarters at Saragossa, which is nearest to the principal fronts. The other Government Departments are divided between the principal Nationalist towns—Burgos, Salamanca, Bilbao, Seville and Vittoria—partly so that each shall be near its own principal sphere of action and partly since none of these towns is large enough to hold them all comfortably. There is, consequently, a great deal of going and coming on the airlines.

The saving of time over surface transport is very great, and in the summer, at least, the air is by far the most pleasant way of travelling. Weather conditions in the winter are not bad from the pilot's point of view by comparison with some European countries. Snow is the principal obstacle, but temperatures are fairly even, and in most of Spain fogs or extensive storm-clouds are not frequent.

It is certain that after the war is over air transport will continue to make rapid strides in Spain. Though the main roads are good, the route mileage of railway is very low. There is not nearly enough rolling stock and the trains are crowded and slow. Spain is the most mountainous country in Europe except for Switzerland, and also one of the largest. With the amount of passenger and freight transport that the reorganisation and development of Spain will necessitate, it seems probable that it will soon possess one of the most extensive and busy air networks in the world.

A.S.

### **Guild Prizes**

AT their meeting last week the Court of the Guild of Air Pilots awarded two of the annual prizes which are offered by them.

The Reliability Trophy for the year 1937-38 went to Wrightways, Ltd., for their work in operating and maintaining an early morning newspaper service between London and Paris in all kinds of weather. The donation of £10 for an annual scholarship, presented by the Air League to the Guild, went to Mr. A. M. D. Howes, who obtained the highest number of marks in the Second Class Navigators' Examinations held during the twelve months ended June 30.

### **Palestine Airways Service**

THE new Near East passenger service from Tel Aviv, the all-Jewish Mediterranean city, has now been inaugurated by Palestine Airways, Ltd., using the new Tel Aviv aerodrome. The service will connect Tel Aviv with Haifa daily, and with Beirut three times weekly. A special taxi service will bring passengers to Tel Aviv from Jerusalem, which is 40 miles distant. The 400-metre runway of the aerodrome carries the name "Tel Aviv" in both English and Hebrew.

This new service is especially appropriate at the present time, owing to the danger of travelling by road and rail in the Holy Land. It is operated with a Short Scion Junior.